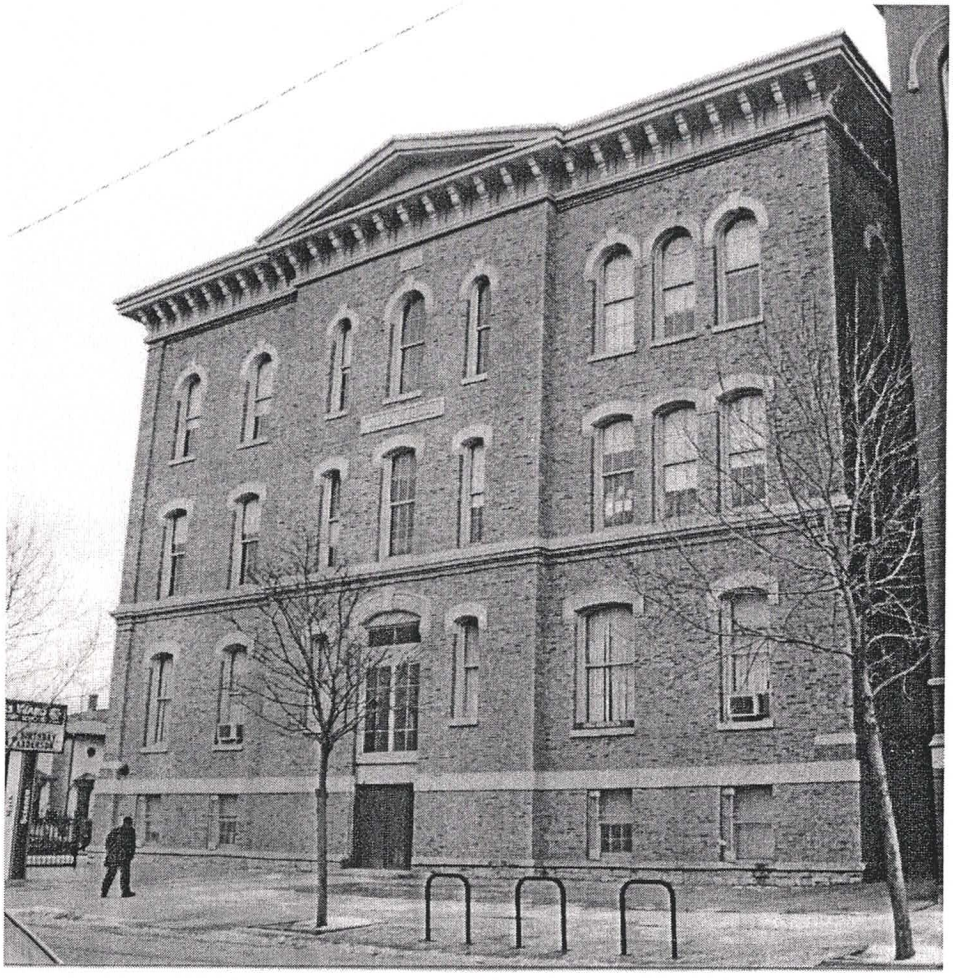
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



James Ward Public School

2703-29 South Shields Avenue

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, February 5, 2004

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Denise M. Casalino, P.E., Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

James Ward Public School

2703-29 S. Shields Avenue

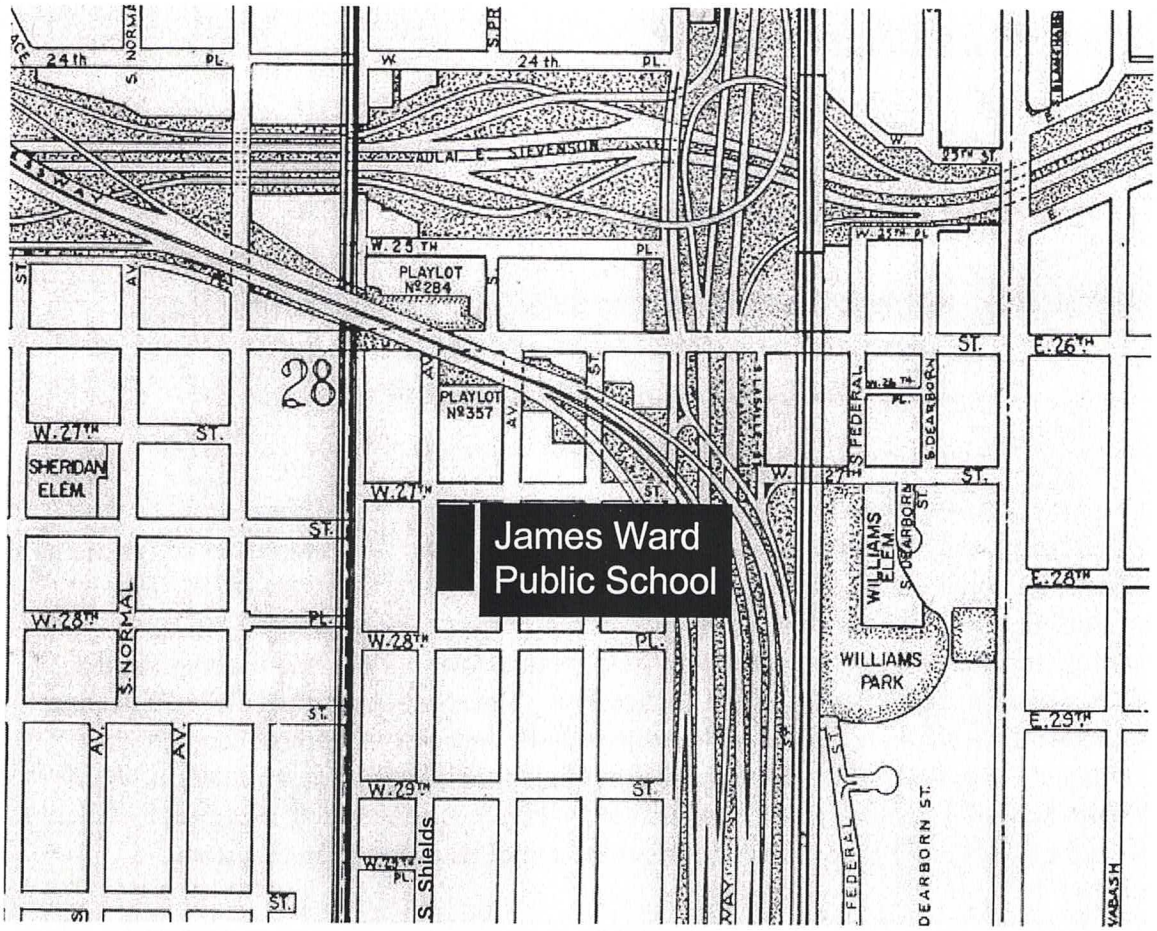
Built: **1874-75 (original building)**
1897, 1924 (additions)

Architects: **Johnston and Edelmann (1874-75 original building)**
Normand S. Patton (1897 addition)
John C. Christensen (1924 addition)

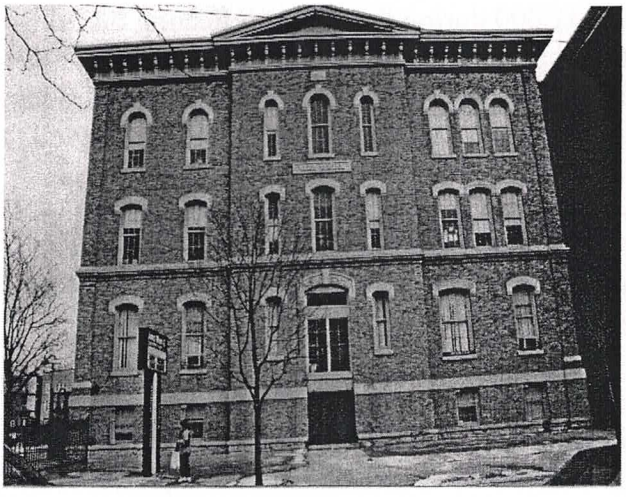
The James Ward Public School, located on South Shields Avenue between W. 27th and 28th Streets, is the oldest public school building in Chicago that remains in active use as a school, and one of only a few extant school buildings dating from the 1870s. Ward exemplifies the importance of the decade of the 1870s in the history of Chicago educational life, when Chicagoans strove to rebuild their public school system in the aftermath of the devastating 1871 Chicago Fire. The school's original 1874-75 section reflects the idealized design of 19th-century school houses that featured large, high-ceilinged classrooms and tall windows providing good light and air circulation. Ward Public School is named for James Ward (1814-1881), a prominent Chicagoan associated with the City's early growth and the development of its public school system.

The oldest section of the Ward Public School is an excellent and rare example of a school building designed in the Italianate style, an extremely popular architectural style in Chicago in the 1870s and 80s, and displays handsome round-arched stone lintels and a pressed-metal cornice. Today, Ward is one of only seven known Italianate-style schools remaining in the City. Ward School's two additions also exhibit excellent craftsmanship in materials and detailing, using molded brick, stone and terra cotta to create both Romanessque- and Classical-style ornament.

Ward Public School is also associated with several architects of note. The 1874-75 section of Ward School was designed by Johnston and Edelmann, a firm best known today for its impact on the early career of Louis Sullivan, an internationally known architect who played a major role in the development of the Chicago School of Architecture. Sullivan's 1875 interior fresco designs for two of Johnston and Edelmann's prominent buildings attracted critical acclaim in the press, providing an important boost to the young architect's fledgling career. The 1897 addition to Ward School was designed by Board of Education Architect Normand Patton who was well-known for his expertise with institutional buildings, especially public schools, college buildings and libraries. John C. Christensen designed Ward's 1924 addition. During Christensen's 38-year tenure as the Board of Education's Architect, he designed dozens of schools in a variety of styles that can be seen in neighborhoods throughout the City.



The James Ward Public School is located on South Shields Avenue, between 27th and 28th Streets, in the Armour Square neighborhood on Chicago's South Side.



Constructed in stages over a fifty-year period (1874-1924), Ward Public School (top) has experienced few significant changes to its exterior. The original building (bottom left) was completed in 1875 in the Italianate style. The school received additions in 1897 and 1924 (bottom right) that emulate the earlier building's scale and massing.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHICAGO SCHOOLS AND THE JAMES WARD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Chicago's rich history of public education dates to the incorporation of the City in 1837, when management of the schools was vested in the newly created City Council. As directed by the City's Charter, Council members immediately appointed a Board of Inspectors—predecessors to the Board of Education—to oversee management of the schools. Progress in establishing a system of free public schools had to wait, however, due to the Panic of 1837 and the Depression that followed. Only a few meager frame buildings were erected over the next several years. During that time, the State Legislature expanded the City Council's powers over school matters, giving it authority to sell or lease school lands, and to raise funds by taxation when necessary for constructing school buildings.

Chicago's first permanent school was erected in 1845 on Madison Street near Dearborn. Built at a cost of $7,500, the two-story brick structure measured 60 x 80 feet and was known as School No. 1 until its name was later changed to the Dearborn School. Chicago's public school enrollment remained small through the 1840s and fifties. Although all children five years and over were eligible to attend the public schools, only 1,794 children were enrolled in 1849. By 1857, the City had ten public schools—including its first high school (built 1856)—and a total of just 4,380 students. In the elementary grades, instruction was offered in spelling, reading, grammar, penmanship, arithmetic, geography, and morals.

Chicago's student population rose to nearly 41,000 during the 1860s, reflecting the phenomenal growth of the City's population during this decade. New public school buildings and additions to established schools was urgently needed. Prior to 1865, money for erecting school buildings came in part from special taxes levied for the purpose and from the school fund income. Between 1867 and 1870, however, bonds totaling $1.2 million were issued for the purpose of purchasing new school sites and constructing buildings upon them. The schools erected during the 1860s were considerably more substantial than their predecessors, costing from $30,000 to $75,000 each and reflected the City's commitment to investing in public education.

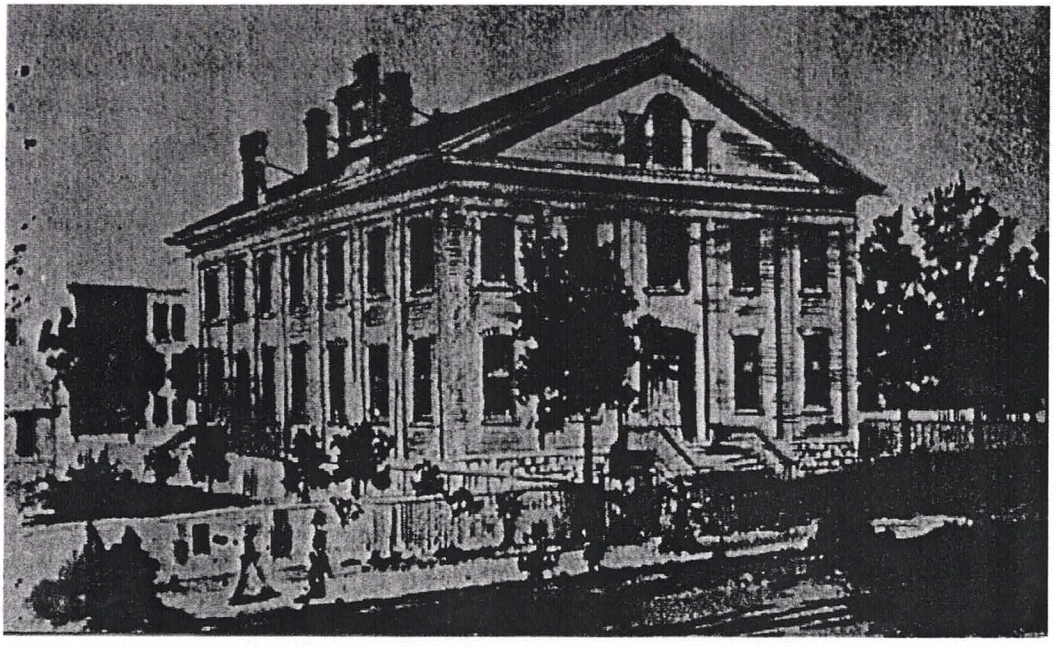
The Great Fire of October 1871 dealt a severe blow to Chicago's public schools. Enrollment dropped from nearly 41,000 in 1870 to 3,500 in 1872. Ten school buildings—one in the South Division and nine in the North Division—valued at over a quarter of a million dollars, were destroyed by the Fire, leaving only two buildings in the North Division still standing. The Board of Education immediately began the work of reconstruction, and by the end of 1873, most of the destroyed schools were rebuilt. An editorial in the 3 May 1874 *Chicago Tribune* reviewed the City's public schools, stating that:

"No one can examine the Public Schools of this city at all carefully or intelligently, without being impressed with their admirable character. Free to the poorest child in the city, and yet so conducted as to be in every respect suitable to the wealthiest. Every boy and girl in Chicago, who has the disposition and ability, may have completed the High School course of study, upon attaining the age of seventeen years. This course of study will compare favorably with the average college course."

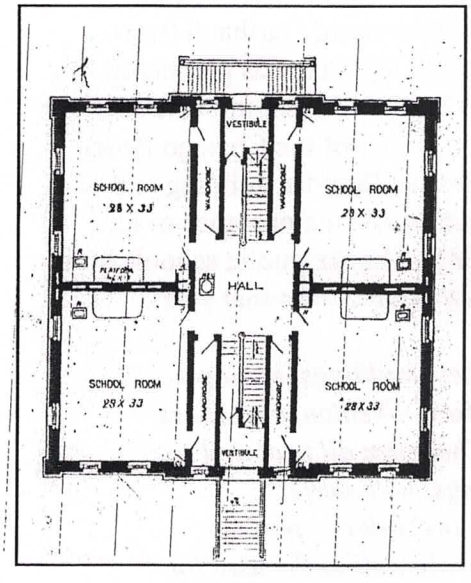
Despite this praise, the pace of school building in Chicago continually failed to keep up with the growing enrollment. Only eleven schools were constructed in the three years following the 1871 Fire. In 1874 there were nearly 48,000 enrolled in the City's 39 public schools, of which 10,000 children could only attend half-day sessions due to the lack of space. One of the new schools erected in 1874 was the King School, located on Harrison Street near Western (now demolished). This three-story brick structure with basement was designed in the Italianate style. It featured a center-hall plan with four rooms to a floor, each of which measured 28 x 33 feet. At King School, toilets for the first time were located in the basement, rather than outdoors; brick partition walls were used instead of wood; and the two stacks of chimneys and ventilators were situated in the center of the building—one on each side of the hall. The Board of Education was so pleased with this building—designed by the Chicago firm Johnston and Edelmann—that it was used as a model for Chicago public schools constructed during the 1870s, including the Ward Public School.

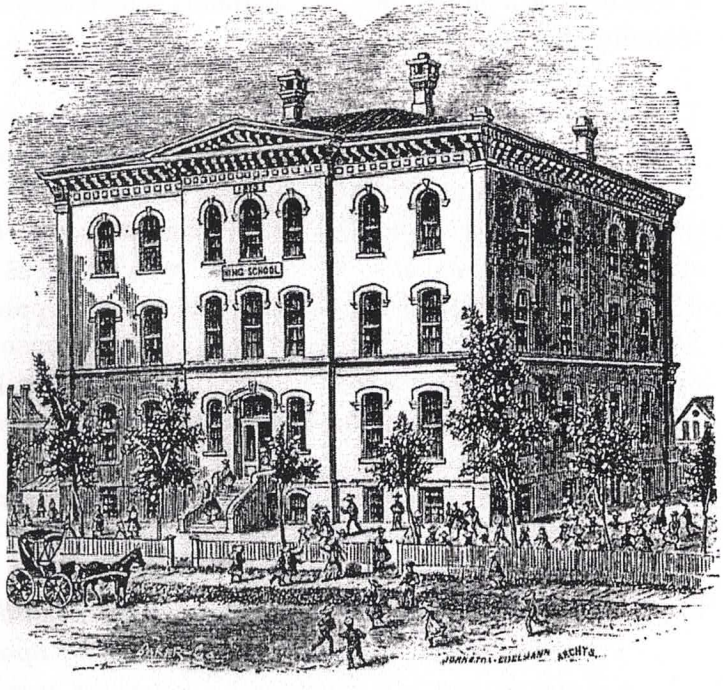
The James Ward Public School was one of six elementary schools completed by the Board of Education in 1875. It was erected at the southeast corner of Garibaldi (now Shields) Avenue and 27th Street, on a lot measuring 175 x 125 feet that was purchased the previous year for $7,300. The school—built at a cost of $26,425 to accommodate 756 students—was named after James Ward, who served as a member of the Chicago Board of Education from 1857 until 1863, when he was appointed the Board's Building and Supply Agent. In this capacity, he supervised the construction and maintenance of all new school buildings erected in Chicago from 1863 to 1881. The six public schools built in 1875 were described in the Board of Education's *Annual Report* from that year:

"The Board has erected during the past year six new buildings, having a seating capacity for 4,708 pupils. The Pickard, Ward, Sheldon, and Jones School buildings were opened during the year. These are all neat and substantial three story and basement brick buildings, with perfect ventilation, (each room having light and air upon two sides), upon the same plan as the King School, and answer excellently well to the uses for which they are intended. The buildings are perfect and complete in every detail, thoroughly substantial, a credit to the city, and improvement upon those heretofore constructed, and have been erected at less cost than any previous year."



Dearborn School, north side of Madison Street between State and Dearborn (demolished) , was built in 1845 as Chicago's first permanent school.





King School (above), built in 1874 on Harrison Street near Western (demolished), was a three-story brick structure with basement designed in the Italianate style. It featured a center hall plan with four rooms to a floor, each of which measured 28 x 33 feet. The Board of Education was so pleased with this building, designed by the Chicago firm Johnston and Edelmann, that it was used as a model for Chicago public schools constructed during the 1870s, including the Ward Public School.

Ward Public School's original 1874-75 building possesses both the physical characteristics common to nineteenth-century schools and excellent integrity. It was erected at a time when Chicago was growing rapidly and the need for new schools seemed never ending. The noted architectural historian Carl Condit quotes Chicago Board of Education statistics that the City built 169 public school buildings between 1871 and 1900. The number of private schools, including parochial schools, was also large.

Based on information gathered by the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, certain common physical characteristics of Chicago schools during this period can be identified. They were typically two to four stories in height and built with load-bearing exterior walls of brick. Facades were symmetrical, with central entrances embellished with ornament. Windows were tall and narrow. Classrooms, the number of which could vary, opened off central corridors dominated by wooden staircases. The original section of the Ward Public School is an excellent example of this basic building type.

Today, the James Ward Public School is the oldest public school building in Chicago still in active use. Ward is one of only three known extant school buildings dating to the 1870s, the others being the 1876 D.R. Cameron Public School in Humboldt Park and the 1875 Headley School at 2107 N. Magnolia in Lincoln Park. Headley School, however, has since been converted to condominiums, leaving Ward and Cameron as the only schools from the 1870s still being used as schools. Ward is also believed to be one of the oldest school buildings in Illinois still in use.

THE ITALIANATE STYLE AND CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The 1874-75 section of the James Ward Public School at 27th Street and Shields Avenue was built in the Italianate style, a popular and widespread architectural style in the United States from approximately 1850 to 1890. It was especially common in Midwestern cities and towns such as Chicago, which were growing rapidly during the years of the style's popularity.

The Italianate style began in England as part of the Picturesque movement, which was a reaction to the formality of Neoclassicism and the Greek Revival, dominant stylistic movements in both Europe and North America during the late 18th- and early 19th-centuries. Visually charming villas and farmhouses of rural northern Italy served as the original inspiration of the style. The Italianate was introduced to an American audience by architect Alexander Jackson Davis, who designed several houses in the style as illustrations for Andrew Jackson Downing's popular books extolling suburban and country living.

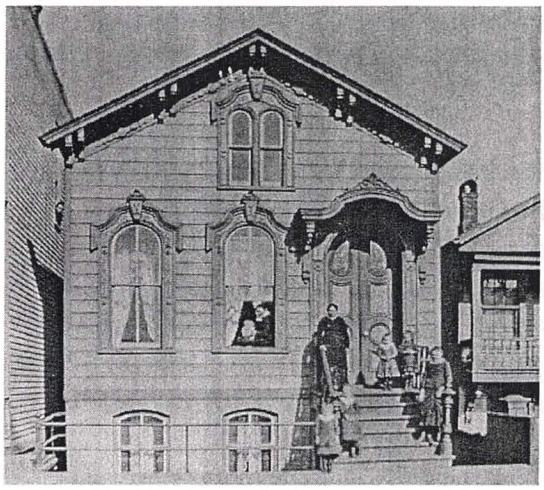
The Italianate was an extremely popular architectural style in Chicago—particularly from the 1860s to the 1880s—and was used for a wide variety of building types, such as houses, schools, commercial and institutional buildings. Store buildings along major

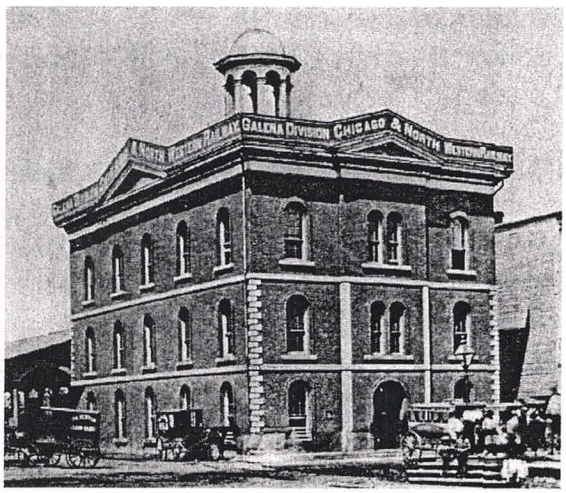
shopping streets such as Milwaukee Avenue on the Near Northwest Side and 18th Street in Pilsen also provide visual evidence of the style's popularity during the years following the Chicago Fire of 1871.

An easily adaptable style in terms of both materials and detailing, the Italianate could be built to any budget and was equally popular for high style and working-class buildings. Most Italianate buildings were cubic in overall form, with regular, often symmetrical facades. Other characteristics of the style included tall, narrow windows topped by segmental or flat-molding; projecting cornices with decorative brackets; and hipped or flat roofs, often paired with cupolas.

The original 1874-75 section of the James Ward Public School is an excellent example of the Italianate style as used for a Chicago school building. Its overall symmetry, dark brick walls contrasting with light stone trim, tall double-hung windows with rounded lintels, and cornice supported by brackets, are all common aspects of the Italianate style as used in Chicago. Ward's construction by a cost-conscious Board of Education during a period of nation-wide Depression precluded elaborate ornamentation. Yet it clearly expresses through its materials, form and overall composition the characteristics of the Italianate style.

Although the Italianate was the predominate style for school buildings in Chicago during the 1870s and 1880s, there are relatively few extant examples of schools in this style remaining in Chicago. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey identifies only seven Italianate-style school buildings in the City and only three 1870s school buildings, including Ward Public School. Three of the other Italianate schools are located in community areas close to Ward School—Bridgeport and the Lower West Side—with the remaining three located in Humboldt Park, the Near North Side and Lincoln Park.





The Italianate was an extremely popular architectural style in Chicago from the 1860s to the 1880s, and was used for a wide variety of building types, such as this cottage (left) and the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad Depot (demolished) at Kinzie and Wells Streets (right).

The Ward Public School (top), built in 1874 in the South-Side Armour Square community area, is the oldest of seven known extant Italianate-style school buildings in Chicago. Two of these, McClellan Public School (above left) and Mark Sheridan Public School (above right), are located in the neighboring Bridgeport community area and date from the early 1880s. All three schools emulate the 1874 King School in appearance and plan.

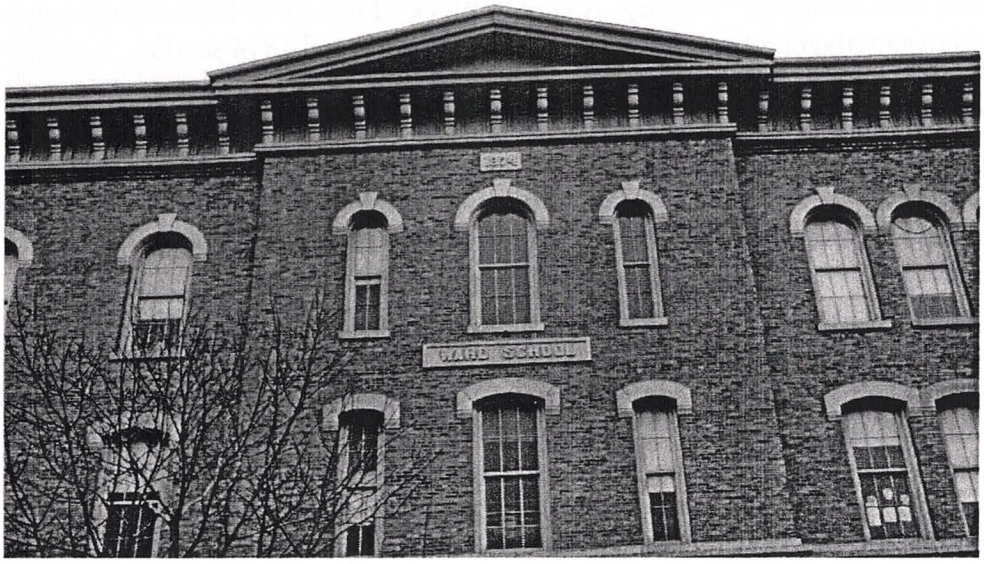
BUILDING AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The James Ward Public School is located at 2703-09 S. Shields (formerly Garibaldi) Avenue in the northern portion of Chicago's Armour Square community area. Armour Square is about two miles south of the Loop and is roughly bounded by Cermak Road (22nd Street) on the north, Pershing Road (39th Street) on the south, railroad tracks on the west, and the Dan Ryan Expressway on the east. The northern portion of the community—including the land upon which the Ward Public School stands—was annexed to Chicago in 1853 when the City limits were extended to 31st Street, and the remaining section was annexed in 1863.

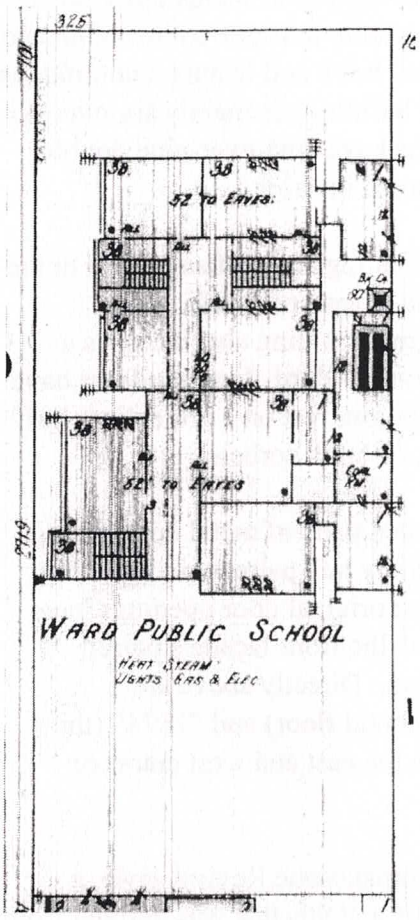
Named after a small neighborhood park, Armour Square is a narrow strip of land that developed as a working-class neighborhood during the second half of the 19th-century. The completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 and the construction of the Rock Island Railroad shortly afterwards led to much industrial development along the South Branch of the Chicago River by 1900. Access to industrial areas along the waterway and railroad fueled the development of scattered working-class housing along Wells and Wentworth, south of 22nd Street, in the 1850s and sixties. The 1865 opening of the Union Stock Yards to the southwest brought additional development within the southernmost portion of the community area. Throughout the late 19th-and early 20th-centuries, industrial buildings were also erected along the railroad lines running through Armour Square.

People from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds were attracted to Armour Square. The original 1874-75 section of the Ward Public School was built to serve the children of German, Irish and Swedish laborers who initially settled in the area. Upon completion of the Ward School's first addition in 1897, the area was beginning to experience an influx of Italians and Yugoslavians, who became the first and second largest groups in Armour Square, respectively, by the time Ward School was further expanded in 1924. Around 1912, Chinese immigrants began to move from the original Chinese settlement on South Clark Street to Cermak Road and Wentworth Avenue, which became the hub of Chicago's new Chinatown.

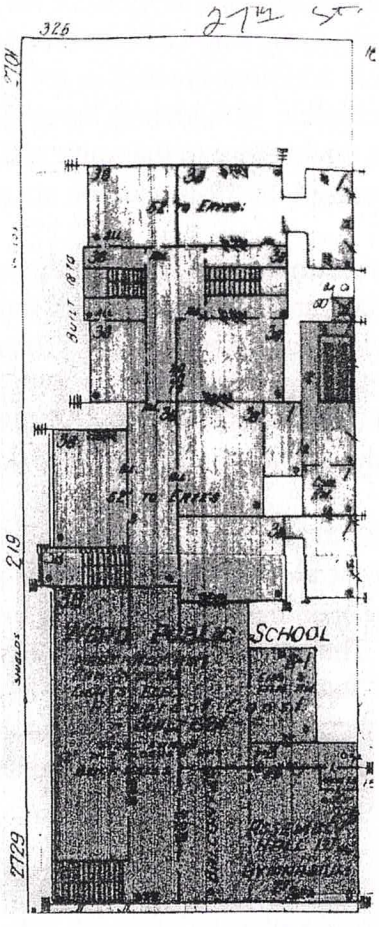
Ward Public School comprises most of the east side of South Shields Avenue, between 27th and 28th Streets. The elevated route of the Dan Ryan Expressway is located within two blocks of the 27th Street and South Shields intersection. The immediate neighborhood surrounding the Ward Public School contains streetscapes and individual buildings typical of the working-class history of the Armour Square community. Most of the buildings surrounding the school consist of frame cottages and brick two- and three-flats that were erected between the 1870s and World War I, and feature architectural styles common to Chicago, such as Italianate. Many of these buildings were later re-clad, and are interspersed with ca. 1970s residences. The block directly across the street from Ward School features a ca. 1950s twelve-story brick-clad residential building surrounded by open space, illustrating the redevelopment of large sections of Armour Square that



The oldest section of Ward Public School exhibits features typical of the Italianate style, such as overall symmetry; tall, narrow windows with round-arched lintels; and a pressed metal cornice with decorative brackets. The front facade displays decorative stone panels with the words "Ward School" (second floor) and "1874" (third floor).



1911



1924

The 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (left) shows the footprint of Ward School's original section and its 1897 addition. The school's 1924 addition is included on the Sanborn Map from 1950 (right).

occurred in the mid- to late 20th-century. An entire block of two-story brick residences was recently erected diagonally across from the School's original 1874 section.

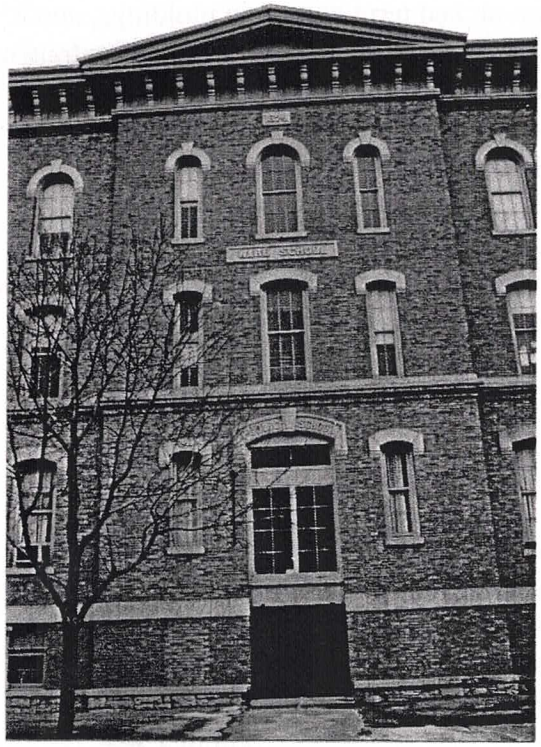
The James Ward Public School has excellent integrity and has experienced few significant changes to its exterior. Constructed over a fifty-year period (1874-1924), Ward Public School today reflects its final, 1924 appearance. The original building at the southeast corner of Shields Avenue and 27th Street was designed by Johnston and Edelmann in the Italianate style and completed in 1875. Ward School's six-bay central section was built in 1897 at a cost of $43,463 to accommodate another 300 students. Designed by Normand S. Patton in the then-popular Romanesque style, this addition emulates the earlier building's scale and massing. The addition originally had nine rooms and a kindergarten that was probably located in the basement, as was typical at the time. It also included a separate boiler room and brick smoke stack, which were connected to the rear of the building. Ward School was extended further to the south in 1924 with a sensitive nine-bay addition by John C. Christensen, which replicates the 1897 addition's design and materials.

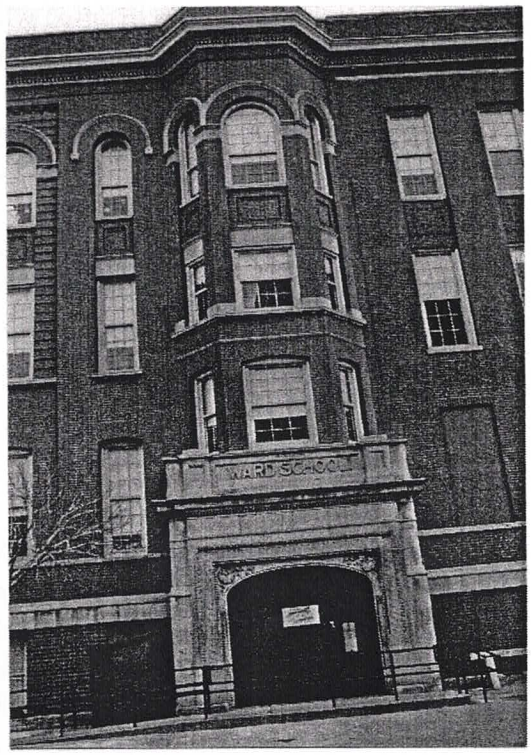
Although comprised of three separate sections, Ward School's front façade along Shields Avenue maintains an integrated appearance. The school is cubic in shape and symmetrical in its arrangement of doors and windows. A simple buff-colored limestone water table visually connects all three sections of the building, which stands three stories in height with a raised basement. The 1874-75 section is clad in mustard-colored Chicago common brick. The south additions are clad in red pressed brick and feature a continuous buff-colored limestone cornice. Windows in the original building are mainly six-over-six, double-hung wood sash, while those in the south additions have nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash. Windows in the 1924 addition are arranged in pairs.

The 1874-75 building is distinguished for its quality of detailing and craftsmanship in the Italianate style, such as tall, arched windows with rounded limestone lintels, and a pressed metal cornice with decorative brackets. The original building also includes a foundation of randomly laid, gray-colored limestone. First and third-floor windows have individual, buff-colored limestone sills. Second-floor windows rest on a projecting, buff-colored limestone sill course, below which are two bands of brick corbels.

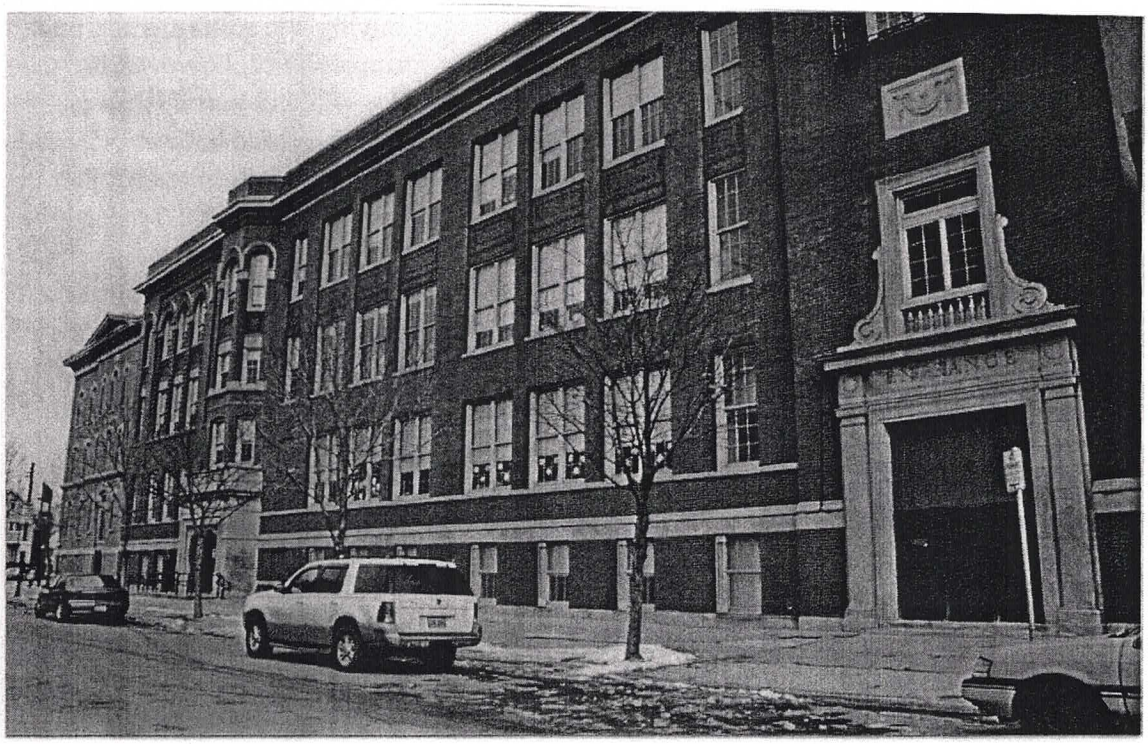
Entrance to the 1874-75 building is through centrally located pairs of metal doors along the west (front) and east facades, both of which are topped by tall, paired windows that originally served as door openings. (Stairs leading to these original door openings have been removed as well.) The segmental-arched lintel above the front façade's paired windows has the words "Public School" set in raised letters. Directly above are decorative stone panels with the words "Ward School" (second floor) and "1874" (third floor). Ornamental roof pediments are also situated above the east and west entrance doors.

The 1897 addition displays visual characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style, a popular architectural style in Chicago during the late 1880s and 90s that was derived from medieval European architecture, primarily churches. Romanesque features include third-





The original paired front doors on Ward Public School's raised first floor were later transformed into windows (above left). Ward School's two additions exhibit excellent craftsmanship in materials and detailing, using molded brick, stone and terra cotta to create both Romanesque and Classical style ornament, as seen in its entrances from 1897 (above right) and 1924 (below).



floor round-arched windows detailed with round-arched terra cotta drip moldings, and a vertical strip of bay windows that provides a picturesque appearance. The front entrance to the 1897 addition is set within a segmental-arched opening that is surrounded by gray limestone. The entrance surround is topped by a Classical entablature, above which is a decorative stone panel with the words "Ward School."

The 1924 addition features Classical detailing, such as a front entrance flanked by Ionic pilasters and a frieze inscribed with the word "Entrance." Directly above the entrance is a pair of windows flanked by decorative scrolls and a stone panel embellished with a decorative swag.

JAMES WARD

It was the practice of the early Chicago Board of Education to name public schools after their members. Ward School's namesake, **James Ward (1814-1881)**, was a prominent Chicagoan associated with the City's early growth and the development of its public school system. Born in the North of Ireland, Ward left home at twenty years of age to start a new life in the United States. He initially settled in Auburn, New York, where he managed a farm and stone quarry until moving to Chicago in 1841. Within a year, he purchased several lots near the southeast corner of Sangamon and Randolph Streets from Philo Carpenter and erected a residence for his family. Ward was ridiculed for purchasing property in an area "so far out of town," which was completely undeveloped at the time. His new residence was only the fourth house erected west of the Chicago River in Carpenter's Addition to Chicago.

Upon his arrival in the City, Ward entered the business of buying and selling grain, and was among the first of Chicago's meat packers. By the spring of 1842, however, he turned his attention to real estate. He and his brother Hugh worked in partnership as master builders, erecting some of the most substantial buildings located between Chicago River and Halsted Street. Ward ended this business following the death of his brother in 1850.

James Ward continued his role as an enterprising citizen, serving as a member of the Board of Education from 1857 to 1863, a period of phenomenal growth in the City's public school system. After retiring from the Board, he was immediately appointed as their Building and Supply Agent, probably due to his previous experience as a master builder. Over the next eighteen years, Ward supervised the construction of all public schools erected in Chicago, a position that was especially demanding during the reconstruction that followed the Fire of 1871. An 1881 book titled *Chicago and its Distinguished Citizens* praised Ward's contributions to the City:

> *"As a mark of esteem for his devotion to the interests of Chicago, and especially to her educational system, one of the schools bears his name...Little can be added to this record of a life which has developed so*

grandly, and which is so intimately connected with the growth of Chicago, especially with her advancement in education. There is not a school house in Chicago, of whose construction Mr. Ward has not had the oversight, and the beauty and convenience of these temples of education is all the monument that a man could wish or serves to commemorate his name."

Ward Public School is named for James Ward (1814-81), a prominent Chicagoan associated with the City's early growth and development.

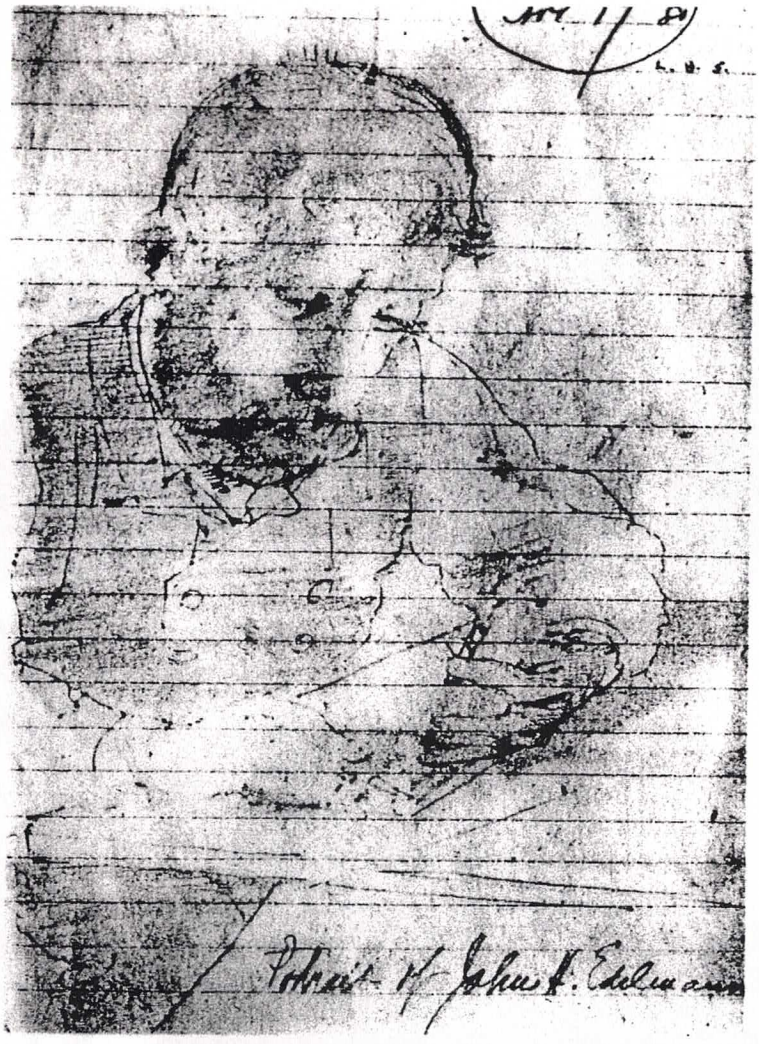
ARCHITECTS

During their short-lived partnership, which lasted from 1874 to 1876, **Joseph Johnston and John Edelmann** designed several important buildings in post-Fire Chicago, including King School on Harrison Street near Western (demolished). This structure served as the model for the City's public schools during the 1870s, including Ward School. However, the firm is best known today for its impact on the early career of Louis Sullivan, an internationally renowned architect who played a major role in the development of the Chicago School of Architecture. Both Edelmann and Sullivan entered the employ of architect William LeBaron Jenney in 1873. Edelmann was the 24-year-old foreman of the office and served as a mentor to the 17-year-old Sullivan, who had recently arrived in Chicago. By 1875, Edelmann was working with Johnston and the partners hired Sullivan to design interior frescoes for two of their buildings—Sinai Synagogue at Indiana Avenue and 21st Street, and Moody Tabernacle at Chicago Avenue and LaSalle Street (both demolished). Sullivan attracted critical acclaim for these frescoes, the design of which gave a boost to his fledgling career. Edelmann remained a close friend of Sullivan's until he left Chicago permanently in 1881.

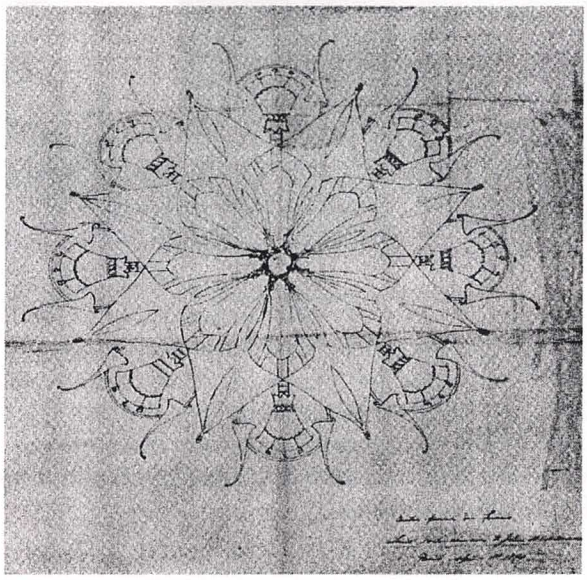
Normand S. Patton (1852-1915) was appointed the Board of Education Architect in 1896 and designed Ward School's first addition the following year in a manner that replicated the original school building's scale and massing. Patton, working both individually and as the principal of the architectural firms of Patton & Fisher; Patton, Fisher & Miller; and Patton & Miller, is noteworthy for designing school and college buildings and dozens of "Carnegie libraries"—public libraries funded by industrialist Andrew Carnegie—throughout Illinois and the Midwest.

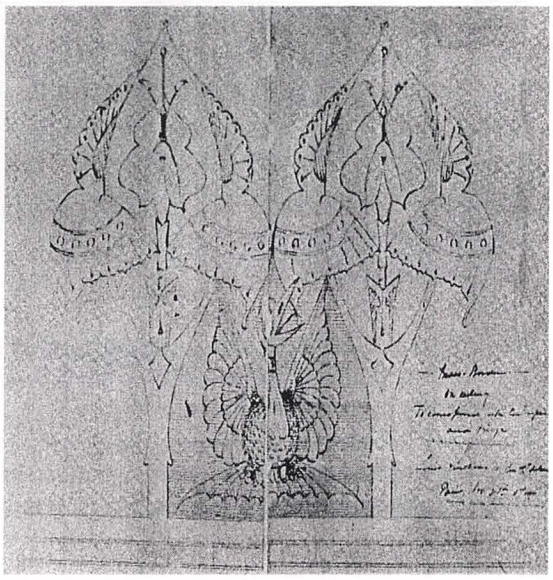
Patton was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and was educated at Amherst College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied architecture. After graduation in 1874, he came to Chicago to join the many other architects that saw the rapidly growing city as an excellent place to practice architecture. After almost a decade of practicing alone or with early partner C. E. Randall, Patton joined with Reynolds Fisher in 1885, and the two were partners for the next 16 years, until 1901, when Fisher moved to Seattle. It was during the middle years of this partnership that Patton designed the 1897 addition to Ward Public School. Patton & Fisher designed several noteworthy Chicago buildings, including the Main Building at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1891-93), Chicago Academy of Sciences at 2001 N. Lincoln Park West (1893) and the Belmonte Flats at 4257-59 S. King Dr. (1893, annex 1896). In addition, the firm designed houses in the Kenwood Chicago Landmark District.

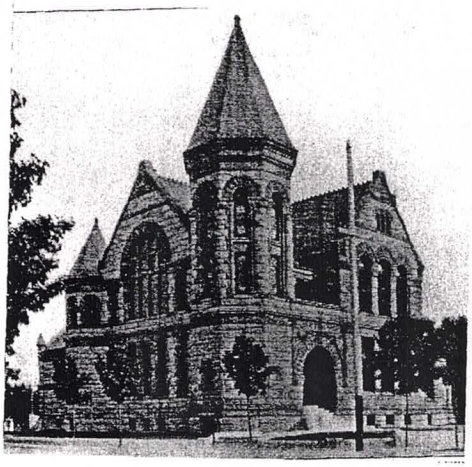
John C Christensen (1877-1967) served as Chicago Board of Education Archtiect from 1921 to 1959, designing dozens of high quality schools throughout the City--both elementary and high schools--throughout his long tenure. Christensen announced his philosophy of school architecture in 1921 when he stated, "I'm designing every new public school as a complete and independent unit, absolutely different from every other school in the city. " The concept of using a variety architectural styles for schools in the

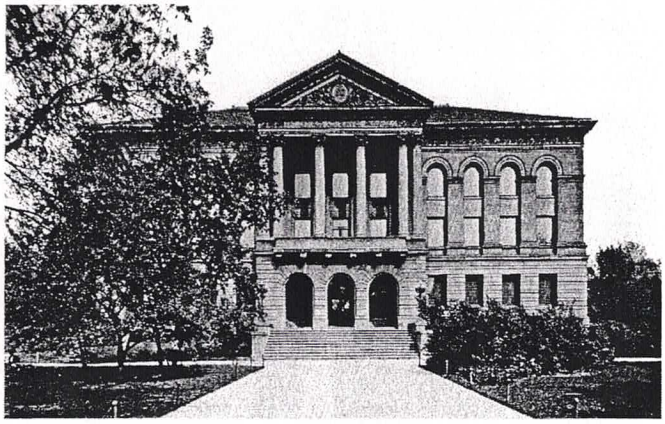


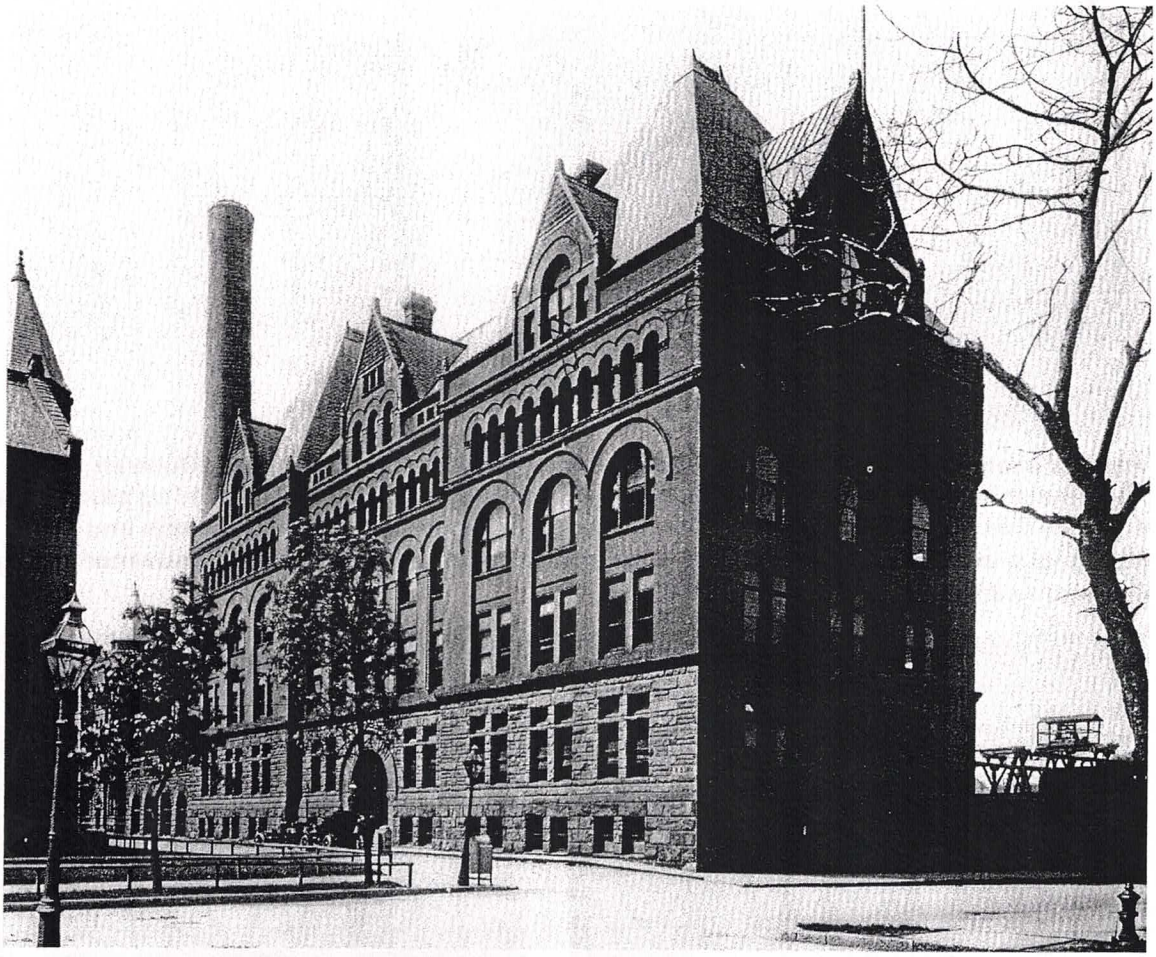
A pencil sketch (above) of John Edelmann, done in 1880 by his friend Louis Sullivan. The 1874 sketches by Sullivan for Edelmann (bottom left and right) are believed to be studies for frescoes that Sullivan executed for Johnston and Edelmann's Moody Tabernacle and Sinai Synagogue in Chicago. These frescoes received critical acclaim and helped advance young Sullivan's career.





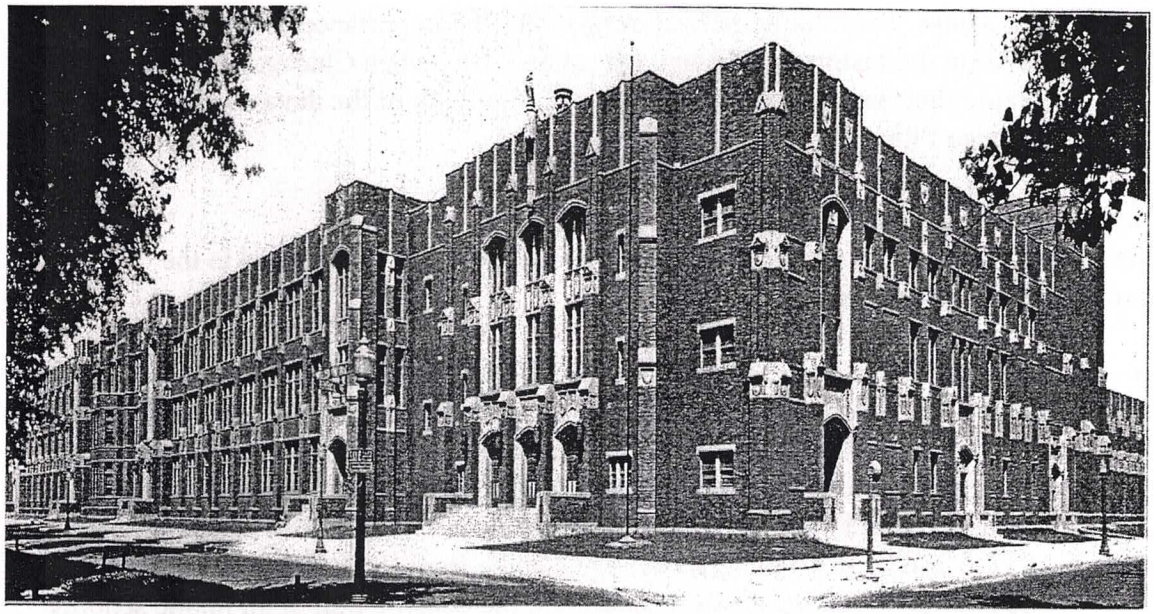






Normand S. Patton designed a number of distinctive public school buildings in Chicago during the 1890s. Patton and his two partners, Reynolds Fisher and Grant Miller, were well-known for their expertise with institutional buildings. Their works include (top left) the Hackney Library in Muskegon, Michigan, and (top right) the Chicago Academy of Sciences, located in Lincoln Park at Armitage Ave. and Clark St. The firm also designed the distinctive Main Building at Chicago's Illinois Institute of Technology (above).

public school system—such as Neoclassical, Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival—was startling at that time. Many of Christensen's school designs from the 1920s and 1930s featured traditionalist styles and restrained Classical ornamentation, such as Ward Public School's 1924 addition. The 1940s marked the start of a new simplified type of modernism that Christensen was to use in his subsequent school designs. More than 20 of Chistensen's school buildings and two of his high school stadiums were documented in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey as "orange", denoting structures possessing potential significance to the surrounding community.



John Christensen exerted enormous influence over the design of Chicago's public schools during his long tenure as Board of Education Architect. His school buildings in Chicago include Flower Technical High School at 3531 W. Fulton (top), and Roosevelt High School at 3400 W. Wilson (above).

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and –630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the James Ward Public School be designated a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois or the United States.

- The James Ward Public School is the oldest public school building in Chicago still in active use as a school, and it is one of the oldest remaining in Illinois. Its original 1874 section features both the physical characteristics common to nineteenth-century schools and excellent integrity. It reflects the "idealized" 19th-century school house which contained large, high-ceilinged classrooms, tall windows providing good light and air circulation, and adequate playgrounds. This basic building program became the standard for school building construction through the rest of the country.

- The James Ward Public School exemplifies the importance of the decade of the 1870s in the history of Chicago educational life, when Chicagoans strove to rebuild their public school system in the aftermath of the devastating 1871 Chicago Fire.

Criterion 3: Important Person

Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic

- Ward Public School is named for James Ward (1814-1881), a prominent Chicagoan associated with the City's early growth and the development of its public school system. Ward was instrumental in developing the area west of the Chicago River to Halsted Street in the 1840s, erecting some of the area's most substantial buildings. He served as a member of the Board of Education from 1857 to 1863, after which he was hired as the Board's Building and Supply Agent. Afterwards, for 18 years Ward supervised the construction of all public schools erected in Chicago, a position that was especially demanding during the reconstruction that followed the Fire of 1871.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The oldest section of the James Ward Public School is an excellent and rare example of a school building designed in the Italianate style, an extremely popular architectural style in Chicago in the 1870s and 80s. Today, Ward is one of only a handful of such early post-Fire Italianate-style schoo buildings remaining in the City.

- The oldest section of Ward Public School displays important visual characteristics of the Italianate style, including overall symmetry, dark brick walls contracting with light stone trim; tall, narrow windows with round-arched lintels; and a pressed metal cornice with decorative brackets.

- Ward School's two additions also exhibit excellent craftsmanship in materials and detailing, using molded brick, stone and terra cotta to create both Romanessque- and Classical-style ornament.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- During their short-lived partnership, which lasted from 1874 to 1876, Joseph Johnston and John Edelmann designed several important buildings in post-Fire Chicago, including King School on Harrison Street near Western (demolished). This structure served as the model for the City's public schools during the 1870s, including the James Ward Public School.

- Johnston and Edelmann made an important impact on the early career of Louis Sullivan, a prolific architect who played a major role in the development of the Chicago School of Architecture. Sullivan's 1875 interior fresco designs for two of Johnston and Edelmann's prominent buildings attracted critical acclaim in the press, providing an important boost to the young architect's fledgling career.

- Board of Education Architect Normand S. Patton designed a number of distinctive public school buildings in the City during the late 1890s. Patton and his two partners, Reynolds Fisher and Grant Miller, were well-known for their expertise with institutional buildings, especially public schools, college buildings and libraries.

- John C. Christensen served as Chicago Board of Education Architect from 1921 to 1959, exerting enormous influence over the design of Chicago's public schools during his long tenure.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic value.

The James Ward Public School has excellent integrity and has experienced few significant changes to its exterior. Constructed over a fifty-year period (1874-1924), Ward Public School today reflects its final, 1924 appearance. The original three-story section with raised basement was designed in the Italianate style and completed in 1875 at the southeast corner of South Shields Avenue and 27th Street. The school's six-bay central section with entrance—designed by Normand S. Patton—was added in 1897. Although designed in the then-popular Romanesque style, rather than the Italianate, this handsome red brick addition emulates the earlier building's scale and massing. The school was extended further to the south in 1924 with a sensitive nine-bay addition by John C. Christensen, which replicates the 1897 addition's design and materials.

The Ward Public School's exterior alterations are minor. The 1874-75 building's original entrance steps have been removed, and its entrance doors along its west (front) and east facades were transformed into windows at an unknown date, with paired metal doors inserted below them at the basement level. Some basement windows have been infilled with brick. Three windows along the north façade, located above each other on the first, second and third floors, have been replaced by doors and connected to a metal fire escape. Some segmental windows along the east (alley) façade of the original section were replaced with rectangular windows in 1897.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its evaluation of the James Ward Public School, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the 1874-75 original building and the 1897 and 1924 additions.

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From: Christensen, *A Quarter of a Century School Building*: p. 19.

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